These projects included construction of Yatri Niwases, tourist lodges, wayside amenities, purchase of boats etc. Out of these projects 5 have been completed by the State Government and remaining are under implementation.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Govt. of India has sanctioned financial assistance of Rs. 22.40 lakhs to State of Kerala in the year 1994-95 for the construction of a tourist lodge at Aranmula, to provide accommodation facilities to tourists.

Quota at Asansol Railway Station

1896. SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no quota at Asansol Railway Station for Jodhpur Express, Howrah-Gorakhpur Express, Ganga Sagar Express, Danapur Express, Lal Quila Express and Janata Express;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the people of Asansol are demanding for alloting quota in these trains; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d). At present reservation quotas are available at Asansol station by 5047 Howrah-Gorakhpur Poorvanchal Express, 3231 Danapur Express and 5205 Ganga Sagar Express Trains. The details are given as under :

Train No.	Quota	
	AC-2 Tier	SL
5047 Poorvanchal Express	4	52
3231 Danapur Express	-	3
5205 Gangasagar Express	-	47

As the computerised reservation facility has been provided at Asansol Station linked with the computerised passenger reservation system at Calcutta, the passengers intending to travel in other trains can seek as many reservations as required on first cum first served basis.

[Translation]

Exemption in Taxes/Tariff on Steel

1897. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hardoi) : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has requested the Ministry of Finance for more exemption in taxes and tariffs for the steel sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Ministry of Finance thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (c). Ministry of Steel makes recommendations to Ministry of Finance on duty matters before formulation of the budget proposals every year. The recommendations for the year 1997-98 are yet to be finalised by Ministry of Steel.

[English]

Reservation of Seats in Separate Coaches

1898. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that thousands of passengers feel inconvenience and great hardship due to seats/berths belonging to a family are allotted in separate coaches and not adjacent to each other under the prevalent computerised reservation system; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government for providing accommodation in the same coach?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). The computerised system ensures that a group of passengers booked on one ticket is normally provided berths in the same cabin. However, this is not possible in those cases where most of the accommodation has already been booked and other intending passengers have excercised their right of choice for lower berths etc. The reservation clerks have instructions that under such circumstances they should inform the intending passengers that accommodation asked for is available in a scattered manner only.

Expenditure incurred on Railway Pojects in Mumbai

1899. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the estimates of total expenditure, the provision and the actual expenditure during 1995-96 and 1996-97 on Borivali-Virar quadruplicating of railway lines (Western Railway), Diva Vasai Project and Diva-Panvel Project (Central Railway), project-wise;

(b) the reasons for less expenditure;

(c) the steps taken/proposed to expedite these projects during this year; and

(d) the time by which these projects are likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). The

details of the projects are as under :

(Figures in crores of Rupees)

	Name	Anticipated cost	Outlay		Actual Expenditure	
			95-96	96-97	95-96	96-97
1.	Vasai Road-Vaitarna Third and Fourth Lines along with flyover with DC traction / (16.64 Kms.)	46.16	7.18	-	7.18	
2.	Borivali-Vasai Road-Quadrupling of lines (17.65 kms).	131.34	4.00	1.00	4.00	
3.	Diva-Panvel Doubling	47.00	5.00	23.79	1.00	
4.	Diva-Vasai Road Doubling	90.00	5.00	5.00	**	

As per decision taken during 1996-97 the quadrupling of Borivali-Virar will be undertaken in lieu of item 1 and 2 above under BOLT Scheme. So, only nominal outlay has been given for the combined scheme in 1996-97.

** Diva-Vasai Road project was cleared in July'96 by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. So, no expenditure was incurred during 1995-96. Work has just commenced in 20 Kms out of 42 Kms.

Actual expenditure at the end of 1996-97 is likely to be the same as per outlay provided for the project.

(c) The projects are being progressed with in the overall constraint of available resources.

(d) The projects are likely to be completed as under :

1.	Borivali-Virar quadrupling	2000
2.	Diva-Panvel doubling	1997-98
3.	Diva-Vasai Road Doubling	1998-99

Status of Attendant of First Class Pass-holder

1900. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attendant to the first class passholder is still termed as paid-servant even after a lapse of fity years of independence;

(b) if so, whether term of attendant is proposed to be changed as companion;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government are considering to allow companion of the pass-holder to travel with the pass-holder in the same class as no purpose is served by the attendant in course of travel in the other class; and

(e) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (e). Serving/ Retired railway employees who are eligible for First Class Privilege Passes are permitted to take an attendant in Second Class who is exclusively employed on salary in the personal service of such such railway employees. There is no proposal to liberalise the existing facilities due to wide repercussions and financial implications.

MRTPC Notice to MTNL

1901. SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the MRTPC had issued a notice of enquiry to the MTNL for charing a service tax at the rate of 5 per cent on telephone bills;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status of the case;

(c) whether the Government propose to withhold the service tax from subscribers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir. Notice of enquiry was issued by MRTPC to MTNL on 17.9.96 in titled case R.S. Mann Vs. MTNL.

(b) In the aforesaid notice the commission has stated that MTNL has now started charging service tax @ 5% on the amount of bill without any quid-pro-quo. It is further stated that the trade practice of charging service tax without any quid-pro-quo has the effect of imposing unjustified costs/restrictions on the consumers and also amounts to manipulation of prices or conditions of delivery of flow of supplies in the market relating to provision of telephone services in a manner so as to impose on the consumers unjustified costs or